

By Albert Carey Caswell . . . Bless You All, as you have blessed so many Heroes and our Nation!

**HONORING THE ROCK BRIDGE  
HIGH SCHOOL LADY BRUINS  
SWIMMING AND DIVING 400-YARD  
FREESTYLE RELAY TEAM**

**HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Rock Bridge High School Lady Bruins Swimming and Diving 400-Yard Freestyle Relay team on its Missouri State Championship.

Madeline Simon, Libby Walker, Kortney Betz and Chelsea Tatlow gave a tremendous showing in the 400-yard freestyle relay with a time of 3:33:37, allowing them to pull ahead by less than two-tenths of a second of the runner-up. These young ladies and their coaches should be commended for all their hard work throughout the regular season and helping bring home their school's first overall team state championship.

I ask that you join me in recognizing the Rock Bridge High School Lady Bruins for a job well done!

**RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTING**

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, today, April 16, 2012, marks the fifth year anniversary of the Virginia Tech shooting in which 32 innocent lives were lost. Today I rise to observe the anniversary and I urge all Americans to join me in keeping all those who were injured, and the families of those who lost their lives in this tragedy in their thoughts and prayers.

More than 30 members of the Virginia Tech family perished that day. Among them were future lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, soldiers, business men and women, mothers, fathers, and leaders. The loss of life at Virginia Tech is a tragedy that all Americans mourn.

On this day, I salute the strength and resilience of the Virginia Tech community. Those belonging to "Hokie Nation" include nearly 30,000 students, 1,300 faculty members and 200,000 living alumni who take pride in their school and in their accomplishments as an institution.

Days after the shooting, Nikki Giovanni wrote a moving poem about the events and her words still ring true today.

We are Virginia Tech.

We are sad today, and we will be sad for quite a while. We are not moving on, we are embracing our mourning.

We are Virginia Tech.

We are strong enough to stand tall tearlessly, we are brave enough to bend to cry, and we are sad enough to know that we must laugh again.

We are Virginia Tech.

We do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it, but neither does a child in Africa dying of AIDS, neither do the invisible children walking the night away to avoid being captured by the rogue army, neither does the baby elephant watching his community being devastated for ivory, neither does the Mexican child looking for fresh water, neither does the Appalachian infant killed in the middle of the night in his crib in the home his father built with his own hands being run over by a boulder because the land was destabilized. No one deserves a tragedy.

We are Virginia Tech.

The Hokie Nation embraces our own and reaches out with open heart and hands to those who offer their hearts and minds. We are strong, and brave, and innocent, and unafraid. We are better than we think and not quite what we want to be. We are alive to the imaginations and the possibilities. We will continue to invent the future through our blood and tears and through all our sadness.

We are the Hokies.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We are Virginia Tech.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the horrible tragedy that occurred five years ago today and as we remember the events of that dreadful day, let us not forget those who lost their lives. I extend my deepest condolences again to the families of all the victims. On this five year anniversary of the horrible tragedy at Virginia Tech, let us extend our thoughts and prayers to all those who were injured or have suffered as a result of this senseless act of violence.

Today, we are all members of the Hokie Nation. We are Virginia Tech.

**RECOGNIZING FRANK BECKWITH  
AS THE 2012 HURLBURT AFA  
CHAPTER 398 MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Frank Beckwith, the 2012 Hurlburt Air Force Association Chapter 398 Middle School Teacher of the Year.

A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and a veteran of Desert Storm, Mr. Beckwith continued his service and leadership in a different capacity—this time as a teacher. He began teaching in 1993 in North Carolina, and in 2001, he moved to Santa Rosa County to teach at Avalon Middle School in Milton, Florida.

Mr. Beckwith has engaged his students through his passion for science and its use as a tool for problem solving. To enhance their learning, he procured data processing equipment for the classroom and has motivated students to excel in science, technology, engineering, and math education through innovative programs. He founded the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Activity, and Math) program, where students are af-

forded the opportunity to spend the day on Blackwater River, competing in various categories, including measuring water chemistry, mapping river depth, and racing to haul one person's daily water consumption from the river to a tank. He is also the sponsor and coach for the school's BEST (Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology) Robotics team.

Aside from teaching at Avalon Middle School, Mr. Beckwith also serves as a faculty associate at the University of West Florida and is President of the Santa Rosa County Science Teacher's Association.

Frank Beckwith's desire to teach is rooted in his family, through his father and grandfather, and was also inspired by his high school science teachers. Their guidance, enhanced by his experience and understanding of the importance and power of education, help built the strong foundation from which Mr. Beckwith teaches and empowers his students to strive for excellence. His greatness lies well beyond his title as Hurlburt AFA Chapter 398 Middle School Teacher of the Year—it lies in the hearts and minds of those who have been deeply impacted by his dedication to the teaching profession and service to our great nation.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize Mr. Frank Beckwith for his great achievements and honorable service. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing him all of the best.

**64TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL**

**HON. SCOTT GARRETT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2012*

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to recognize the 64th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the British Mandate for Palestine expired, and the Jewish People's Council approved the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. That document encapsulates centuries of hopes, hardships, dreams, persecutions, tenacity, and faith. And it signifies the fulfillment of the prayer of the Jewish people: To return once again to their homeland and build a nation based on the principles of freedom, justice, and peace.

It is fitting that on that same day, President Harry Truman signed his name to the announcement recognizing the provisional government of the new Jewish state as the de facto authority of the State of Israel, thus making the United States the first nation to recognize Israel as a nation.

In that moment 64 years ago, and in every moment since, the Jewish people have persevered in the face of adversity, thriving as a nation and as a people, and contributing globally to advancements in areas ranging from academia, economics, and business to arts, culture, and politics. And all the while, the Jewish people have continued to live as a people who, as the Declaration states, love peace but know how to defend themselves.

In the decades that have passed since that momentous event, Israel has remained the United States strongest ally in the Middle East, and the United States has stood steadfastly with Israel. Today, and in the days that